[English]

Production of FCV Tobacco

*434. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the total production of Flue Cured Virginia Tobacco during 1995-96 and 1996-97 in the country, State-wise;

(b) the financial assistance provided by the Tobacco Board to each State to boost the production of tobacco during the above period;

(c) whether tobacco growers of several States have demanded remunerative price for their produces;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The details of State-wise production of Flue Cured Virginia (FCV) Tobacco during 1995-96 and 1996-97 is as under :

(Qty : In Million Kgs)

State	1995-96	1996-97
Andhra Pradesh	101.66	83.08 (Target)
Karnataka	25.00	36.00 (Estimate)
Maharashtra	0.21	0.14 (Target)
Orissa	0.13	0.12 (Target)
Total	127.00	119.34 (Target)

(b) No financial assistance is being given by the Tobacco Board to the States. However, financial assistance is being provided to the FCV Tobacco Growers by the Tobacco Board. During 1995-96, an expenditure of Rs. 40.89 lakhs in Andhra Pradesh and Rs. 17.41 lakhs in Karnataka was incurred under various developmental and extension schemes for increasing the yield and quality of FCV Tobacco. The budgeted outlay of various schemes during 1996-97 in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka is Rs. 45.03 lakhs and Rs. 28.80 lakhs respectively.

(c) to (e). A representation has been recieved from the Karnataka State Tobacco Growers Forum on various issues including remunerative prices for tobacco wherein a specific request to see that the Tobacco growers of Karnataka get an average price of Rs. 50/- per kg. during current Karnataka auctions, has been made.

The Tobacco Board authorises the crop size for Virginia tobacco after consultation with growers and traders, assessment of carryover stocks and the domestic/international demand and supply position. Mininum Support Prices (MSP) for various grades of tobacco are announced by the Tobacco Board on the recommendations of Commission for Agricultural costs and Prices. MSP for the current year for F2 and L2 grades of tobacco are Rs. 19 and Rs. 22 per kg. respectively.

Tobacco Board has fixed a crop size of 29.50 M.Kgs for 1996 Karnataka crop season taking into consideration the domestic and international demand for Tobacco. The average price realised in Karnataka during the current season is Rs. 50.64 per kg

Smuggling of Gold

435. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE :
SHRI DINSHA PATEL :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether according to the World Gold Council about 100 tonnes of gold valued at around Rs. 5000 crores is brought into India every year through illegal channels,

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the World Gold Council has suggested certain measures to check smuggling of gold into the country;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (e). Presumably, the question refers to the report of the World Gold Council, Geneva published in February, 1996. This report states that in 1995 there was a gap of 234 tonnes between legal import of gold and the demand for gold in India and that this gap was met by re-cycling of gold available within the country and other imports. The report, however, does not give any estimate of quantities of gold sourced through these channels.

It is also observed that the referred publication itself states that the accuracy of any statement or onbservation made therein is not guaranteed. It is, therefore, considered that the estimates of demand for gold in India and the quantities of gold illegally imported into India could only be conjectural and not verifiable.

The World Gold Council has not suggested any measures to check smuggling of gold into the country.

Considering demand for gold in the country, Government have allowed import of gold as baggage by eligible passengers on payment of customs duty. Since inception of this Scheme in 1992, 825.8 tonnes of gold has been imported under this Scheme thus curtailing smuggling of gold.